Progress in Experimental Tumour Research, Volume 19. *Immunology of Cancer*. Ed. by V. RICHARDS. 1974. S. Karger, Basel. Pp. 420. Price £21.50.

A decade ago it was somewhat unusual for anyone to specialize in tumour immunology but now the field has evolved its own complex jargon, generating sub-cultures. This volume presents a collection of review articles, much as one would expect to find in the proceedings of a symposium arranged without too much attention paid to the way different contributors cover the field. The symposium approach is also suggested by the multiple authorship of the individual chapters. Despite this it is a useful volume. The twenty-three contributions are reasonably compact and, rather than the broad review approach, authors have concentrated on their own topics of study and interest. It is reasonably up-to-date and most chapters provide the non-specialist reader with adequate background and terminological definition. Essentially, however, it is a volume for the tumour immunologist who wants a quick round-up of what is going on at other points on the frontier. It does not cover the whole front but the gaps are neither wide nor critical. At the price it might be cheaper to go to a symposium.

K. D. BAGSHAWE

Immunopotentiation: Ciba Foundation Symposium 18. Ed. by G. E. W. WOLSTENHOLME and JULIE KNIGHT. Associated Scientific Publishers, Amsterdam. 1973. Pp. 355. Price £7.90.

We have entered a new era of enthusiasm for the treatment of degenerative diseases by immunological methods and the serotherapy of the pre-war era has made a triumphant return garbed in the new respectability of lymphocyte co-operation and suppressor mechanisms. A flood of reports bear glad tidings of clinical remissions induced by transfer factor or BCG, albeit unencumbered by the strict controls now mandatory in other fields of therapeutics. This volume will come as a salutory shock to those eager to embrace the cause of immune stimulation in the management of cancer or persistent infections. It is really a collection of scholarly essays which brings no neat synthesis of biological ideas for immunologists or magic formulae for clinicians. It is not a review of established 'facts'. It must be read by all those who seek to abandon unselective cytotoxic drugs and see the control of Rh disease as the pre-runner of elegant manipulations in other clinical situations. At least the reader's painful awakening will be tempered by the pleasure of handling a finely produced book with splendid illustrations.

A. M. DENMAN

Intrinsic Mutagenesis. A Genetic Approach to Ageing. By SIR MACFARLANE BURNET. 1974. Medical and Technical Publishing Company Ltd, Lancaster. Pp. 244. Price £6.75.

Somatic mutation is the control theme of this book. It makes a well-reasoned approach, given the huge gaps in our current understanding and knowledge. The major emphasis is on the concept that mutational events in both somatic cells and germ-line cells occur at a determinate rate, in the former to allow a definable life-span and in the latter for evolutionary plasticity. Thus environmental agents such as radiation, chemicals, etc. are not the prime cause of mutation but simply increase the opportunities for this to occur, as the result of the intrinsic proneness to error of the repair mechanisms of the damaged DNA of the cells in question. All this is probably acceptable provided that the basic dogma of

DNA reads RNA reads protein is always true. Like most things in biology, this is not a closed subject, and controversy still exists.

The author advances his theme boldly into the causes of ageing and malignant disease of cells. The text is a skilful synthesis of a diverse array of facts drawn from microbial genetics, biochemistry, molecular biology, immunology, pathology, etc. It has been set out in four separate parts starting with a summary of molecular genetics, leading on to discussions of ageing and malignant disease in parts 2 and 3 respectively. The final section is somewhat of a mixture, describing a wide array of human congenital anomalies, and in the reviewer's opinion, neither enhances nor detracts from the arguments advanced in the previous three parts.

In his introduction, the author acknowledges the real difficulties inherent in any attempt to present a basic biological concept, such as the one presented here, in the context of the ever-widening fields of biology. It is true that the book should have appeal for readers of biology in general and, such is its clarity, that 'A' level biology is all that such readers would need. However the treatment of the immunology topics is over-simplified and makes one wonder how well supported the whole structure of the book really is. This is certainly not the author's fault and only time will tell.

However, gerontology can now be said to be truly in the realms of molecular biology, for we are now as old as our DNA and not as young as our arteries.

G. Harris

Announcement

Eighth Annual Red Cross Scientific Symposium

'The Granulocyte: Function and Clinical Utilization'

Washington, District of Columbia

12–13th May 1976

The Eighth Annual Red Cross Scientific Symposium will be held in Washington, D.C., 12–13th May 1976. Invited papers will be devoted to the biochemistry and immunology of granulocytes, their isolation, preservation and clinical use. For further information write to the Research Director, The American National Red Cross, Blood Research Laboratory, 9312 Old Georgetown Road, Bethesda, Maryland 20014, U.S.A.